

DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING OF SAXTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Thursday 2nd August 2019 at 7.30 pm

1. **The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.**
2. **Present**
George Cullingford (Chair) Graham Ward Lisa Handley Jonathan Sullivan
Lydia Kirk (Clerk) Hilary Slater (East Suffolk Council) 1 member of public
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Burroughes.
3. **There were no declarations of interests nor applications for dispensations.**
4. **The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th June 2019 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**
5. **There were no matters arising.**

PUBLIC FORUM

No matters were raised from the public.
Monthly reports from the County and District Councillors
have been put on the village website.

6. **The Chairman reported that he has met with one of our new District Councillors, Maurice Cook, and has given him a tour of the village, highlighting current issues and projects.** Cllr. Cook suggested that East Suffolk Council's Exemplar Fund might be worth considering to help fund the village gateway signs.
The Chair has been sent postcards inviting residents to the Rural Coffee Caravan from 2-4pm on 6th August and 20th September. These have been handed out to most households in the village.
7. **Clerk's Report**
The clerk reported that she has written an article that was published in the July edition of FramFare, about the new defibrillator and asking for more Councillors to come forward. She has received confirmation of the amendments to the banking mandate, removing Kevin Davis and adding Jonathan Sullivan.
The clerk and Chairman attended a planning forum at ESC discussing updates to the planning structure and referral process.
The Highways Department has responded to our letter expressing grave concerns about the eroded verges along A1120 at Church Farm stating that it does not meet its intervention levels.
8. **Councillor Sullivan led discussions with Hilary Slater regarding issues with the parish elections on 2nd May 2019.** GC remarked that he has been on the Parish Council for over 40 years and this year's nominations were by far the most lengthy and complicated.

Nomination Forms

The forms used complicated, legal language, were ambiguous in parts and were excessively lengthy. The Parish Council knows of potential candidates who were put off due to these forms.

HS commented that many parts of the election process, including these forms, are set by the government and they are unable to change the wording on the forms. The Parish Council would like ESC to raise its concerns with The Electoral Commission to make the forms simpler to complete or use 'plain English' alternatives in brackets if the legal terminology must remain.

The Chair also pointed out that when the clerk attended a briefing seminar prior to the elections, the nomination forms were not available and the seminar did not include details of how to complete the forms correctly.

Online Declaration of Interests

Issues with electronic submission of interests resulted in fears that Councillors may not be able to do this within the required 28 days and could face criminal prosecution, through no

fault of their own. HS reassured Councillors that chaser emails and letters would be sent to the Councillor and clerk before any additional actions were taken. ESC tested the new electronic forms before sending them out and is working on problems with emails not being received, not even in spam folders, and Councillors being unable to log in to their accounts. Councillors also had concerns that some people were not sure what interests needed to be declared and knew of people who had, unwittingly, not declared all of their interests. HS acknowledged that getting Councillors to fill the forms in correctly and within the set time limits is a perennial problem and ESC are looking in to making this process easier to understand. Possible solutions include sending Councillor's guidance notes with the forms, using drop-down explanatory boxes to help with the online completion and providing examples of completed forms to aid Councillors.

Councillors also noted that the bureaucracy involved with the expenses claims that had to be completed after the election. They had to print and post the lengthy form at their own cost. It was then not clear where the forms should be posted to.

Councillors felt that had ESDC asked each Parish Council for responses on the forms and election process, they would have received many similar concerns. The clerk commented that she knows of another local Parish Council which had also raised concerns about the nomination form with ESDC, with the Chairman arguing that they were discriminatory due to their complexity, but these concerns had not reached HS.

HS promised to pass on our concerns to the Returning Officer, and send us a copy of the letter that she will send to The Electoral Commission.

HS left the meeting at this point and there was a short convenience break.

- 9. Items 9 and 11 were discussed together.** Councillors noted their disappointment that the District Councillor was not at the meeting despite twice stating his intentions to come. His input whilst discussing financing traffic calming measures in the village was required. LK has asked Cllr Burroughes for financial support for the village signs. Following chasing, he has responded that he should be able to contribute £3,000 to the project. The clerk is continuing to chase an up-to-date quotation from the Highways Department for the gateway signs (either 2 or 4 signs), including erection and siting advice etc. Upon receipt of this, Councillors decided to proceed with an application for funding from the Exemplar Fund (for either 2 or 4 signs depending on price obtained). It was noted that the deadline for receipts is 19th August. Councillors decided to evaluate the effectiveness of the village gateway signs before proceeding with the Vehicle Activated Signs. There were concerns that there may not be enough volunteers to move the VAS device as frequently as necessary for it to have a significant impact on speeding.

ACTION POINTS

- Clerk to chase Pembroke College for a response on siting the signs on its land and a possible financial contribution.
- Clerk to chase quotation from Highways Agency.
- Clerk to contact Cllr. Cook for his support and complete the Exemplar Fund form before the deadline.
- Clerk to provide new quotation to Cllr. Burroughes.

- 10. Framlingham Town Council has responded to the request for funding to help extend the footpath connecting Framlingham and Saxtead.** They require in depth information that the Parish Council would struggle to provide. It was again noted that the land actually falls in Framlingham. Saxtead may struggle to apply for CIL funding when the path would not be in its parish.

ACTION POINT Clerk to contact the Town Council again asking for their opinions on the project and seeing if they would consider taking the project on using CIL money available to them.

- 11. See item 9**

- 12. a) The following payments were approved**

Reference Number	Amount	Payee	Details	Cheque Number
P4 19-20	£13.50	G. Cullingford	Mileage to Planning Forum	695
P5 19-20	£110.00	Suffolkbiz	Suffolk Cloud website and security certificate	696
P6 19-20	£721.25	L. Kirk	Pay to 30 th June 2019	697
P7 19-20	£6.80	HMRC	Income Tax to 5 th July 2019	698

Invoices with full details of items above were on display at the meeting & cheques were signed by GC and GW, excepting P4 19-20 which was signed by JS and GW in accordance with our financial standing orders.

- b) The only receipt since the last meeting was 15 pence interest.
- c) The bank balances were reviewed as being £7,254.65 & £296.17 on 26th July. The bank statements and reconciliation were reviewed and signed off by the Examining Officer.
- d) The year-to-date payments and receipts account was reviewed and considered in order.

13. The Footpath Officer has acknowledged receipt of reports raising issues with several public rights of way in the village. The footpath near Marlborough Road that does not lead anywhere is an ongoing issue and they are looking into an alternative, cost effective solution. A member of the public has reported problems with overgrowth on the footpath near High House and Mill House. The clerk reported this problem on 6th June and it has now been reported again.

Regarding footpath 17, the landowner has been asked to reinstate the route and this was being checked by the Rights of Way department on 17th June.

14. Correspondence received since the date of the last meeting was considered.

15. There were no Councillors' reports.

16. Issues to raise at the next meeting were as follows:-

Receive an update on the village gateway signs and the footpath extension project

17. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 12th September 2019.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked Councillors for attending and closed the meeting at 10.04pm.